

Dear Co-Chairs Mae Flexer and Dan Fox, Vice-Chairs Will Haskell and Stephanie Thomas, Ranking Members Rob Sampson and Gale Mastrofrancesco, and Members of the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee,

My name is Timothy Gabriele. I am a resident of North Haven, CT and I am testifying to express my support for HB 6578, An Act Concerning Participation in the Electoral Process, but in amended form to expand Automatic Voter Registration beyond the Department of Motor Vehicles to other state agencies.

We should be doing everything within our power to expand the fundamental right of voting to every person in Connecticut, so a statewide system of Automatic Voter Registration is a great first step. However, we should not limit this registration process to those who interact with the DMV. The Department of Social Services, Access Health, public schools and universities, and other institutions could administer this process and help CT join the 19 other states with some current version of AVR.

It is also crucial that we restore the right to vote to individuals who have recently been incarcerated. Felony disenfranchisement laws are a byproduct of the effort during reconstruction to limit and deny rights to recently freed slaves and their use since then has been consistent with the goals of white supremacy in that they disproportionately affect communities of color and deny them a voice in their communities. I personally would like to see the U.S. and Connecticut never deny an individual their right to the ballot box, but restoring the rights of those on parole who have served their time would be the least we could do to welcome individuals trying in good faith to reintegrate into society.

I hope the committee and Connecticut lawmakers agree that HB-6578 is due for a vote. I urge you to pass this legislation, and to consider expanding its capabilities to make Connecticut the most voter-friendly state in the union. I thank the committee for their time.

Sincerely,
Timothy Gabriele
North Haven, CT